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A

NARRATIVE

OF SOME

RECENT OCCURRENCES

IN THE

CHURCH OF THE PURITANS,

NEW YORK;

WITH DOCUMENTS RELATING THERETO.

NEW YORK:
WILLIAM S. DORR, PRINTER, 101 NASSAU STREET.
1857.

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NARRATIVE, &c.

BUT little need be said by way of introduction to the Documents which are here submitted to the judgment of the Christian public, but especially to Orthodox Congregationalists; as the Documents will interpret themselves.

It may be proper to state, however, that this method of bringing our grievances to the notice of our brethren of the Church of the Puritans, was not decided upon by the signers of the letter of April 27th to Rev. Dr. Cheever, until we were virtually denied by the Church the opportunity of a personal presentation of the reasons which prompted that letter.

All the business meetings of the church held subsequent to the delivery of the letter to Dr. Cheever, and prior to the Annual Meeting, were informal; not having been convened in accordance with the provisions of the Standing Rules. To have presented ourselves before either of those meetings, with statements of so grave a character as those we now make, would have been a consent on our part to proceed contrary to our fundamental law. This we certainly would not do; especially as at these very meetings, illegal in themselves, our brethren of the majority were loud in their complaints of the *ecclesiastical irregularity* of our letter to the pastor. As between us, if our action was irregular, all that can be said of it is, that it was *speculatively* so; theirs was a violation of plain, written law.

We could not bring our reasons before the church at the Annual Meeting, as the whole time, even until near midnight, was spent in a struggle—fruitless, it proved to be—against what we felt to be a violation of our rights under the Standing Rules.

At the special meeting, convened on our call on July 16th, we were not permitted to place our communication before the church, nor would the church even pledge itself to hear us at a future, fixed day. Two reasons, chiefly, were assigned by the speakers of the majority for this denial. The first was the absence of the pastor. But the pastor himself, four days previous, read the call for the meeting. Whatever may have been the occasion of his absence, we were not responsible therefor. Their other reason was, that the church had already, in effect passed judgment upon us; and we had no claim to be heard. To which, our brief reply is, that if they had done so, it was without investigation or trial. And to both of these reasons we make the further reply, that when Dr. Cheever placed the letter in the hands of the church, he in terms committed the whole matter to them, and

they assumed and acted upon this trust at the Annual Meeting. The church was therefore competent to act on our communication, according to their own virtual acknowledgment.

We now give a summary of the proceedings of the church, connected with this matter, including those of the meeting of July 16th.

The letter to Dr. Cheever, bearing date April 27, 1857, (which is recited on page 17,) was presented to him on Monday, May 11th, by a Committee of the signers, who indicated to him the medium through which we would look for his reply. The reason for the delay in presenting the letter to him, after it was prepared and signed, was that the Sabbath immediately preceding was the regular Communion season, with the solemnities of which we had no disposition, in any manner, to interfere.

Dr. Cheever disregarded our intimation as to a reply ; but on the ensuing Sabbath morning, May 17th, at the usual time for reading notices, he informed the church that he had received a letter from seventeen members, which in his judgment called for the action of the church, and he therefore invited all the members to be present in the Lecture Room on Monday evening, the 18th, urging the attendance both of males and females. The former only, by our Rules, are entitled to vote.

The result of this announcement was to draw together not only those members of the church whose faces are familiar in our social meetings, but others, whom we could not so readily recognise ; nor these alone, but very many of the congregation, and strangers also, who either heard, or were informed, of the notice.

After the meeting was opened by prayer, Dr. Cheever said, that the object of the meeting was to consider and take action upon a document that he had recently received, signed by seventeen members of the church. The document he characterized as irregular, and not in accordance with ecclesiastical rule ; but said that he had determined to throw it upon the church, in whose love and confidence he implicitly relied.

Mr. William C. Gilman having been called to the chair, Mr. F. E. Mather asked attention to the Rule relative to special business meetings, urging that the church had been irregularly convened. No attention being paid to his remonstrance, he asked that his protest be entered on the records.

Immediately on the reading of the letter to Dr. Cheever, Mr. Charles Abernethy offered the following resolution :

“Resolved, That our pastor, Rev. George B. Cheever, D. D., has our entire and undiminished confidence and affection, and we hereby express our desire and determination that he continue in his present position as pastor of this church.”

To which Mr. Elisha C. Wilcox offered the following amendment :

“That Christian charity, the peace of the church, and the development of the truth, all require that the signers of the letter produced by Dr. Cheever

be requested to present to him a written statement of the reasons which in their judgment call for a dissolution of the present pastoral relation; and in case that Dr. Cheever should not regard the same when presented, as requiring such dissolution, that he be and hereby is requested to unite with said signers, and call at an early day a Council according to Congregational usage, to which all matters of dissatisfaction concerning the relation of pastor and people may be submitted."

After considerable discussion, in which the irregularity of the letter to Dr. Cheever was the principal topic, the question was taken on Mr. Wilcox's amendment, and it was declared lost by a division, 20 ayes to 48 nays.

Mr. Mather here called attention to the 14th Standing Rule, which forbids the adoption of any resolution at the same meeting at which it is introduced; and provides for its final consideration at the next regular meeting.

Rev. I. P. Warren (who had recently joined the Church,) moved to suspend this Standing Rule; but the Chair decided that the motion to suspend could only be received as a substitute for the original resolution of Mr. Abernethy!

The question was then called for on Mr. Abernethy's resolution, which was taken, and the resolution adopted without dissent—the minority declining to vote.

An attempt was made by Rev. C. J. Warren, (a member of a few months standing,) to introduce a resolution reflecting on the signers of the letter to Dr. Cheever, but after discussion it was withdrawn. A conciliatory resolution offered by Dr. Ball was adopted in its stead, and the meeting adjourned.

After the usual religious services on the morning of Sabbath, May 24th, Dr. Cheever read a call for a special meeting of the church for business, on the ensuing Tuesday evening, the 25th—so the notice, doubtless an inadvertance, as Tuesday was the 26th.

This call was addressed to the Clerk, but was never placed in his hands, nor was the meeting convened by his instrumentality, as provided by our Standing Rules. Subsequent investigation disclosed the fact, that the call had only been made out and signed on the Saturday evening preceding the Sabbath. The brethren who had the movement in hand, endeavored to find the Clerk *on the morning of the Sabbath* when the call was read, but he was not to be found. He had left the city at five o'clock the day previous on an absence of two or three days. ●

As the informality of the subsequent proceedings rests mainly on the fact of this call not having been properly made, and as the objection raised by us has been pronounced trivial and technical, it may be well here to show the necessity for this Rule, and the duty of adherence to its provisions.

The Clerk holds the records of the church. He knows who are, and who are not, members. He thus stands guard, as it were, to prevent the first intrusion of wrong. It is not a sufficient answer that the members of

the church are acquainted with each other. However this may be in small country parishes, this is not so in our city churches. Here the constant changes which are taking place, additions and withdrawals by letter, render this general acquaintance impossible. We have nothing to rely upon but our records, and of these, the Clerk is the custodian. Hence the propriety of the Rule.

If, as is asserted, the Rule be so trivial as not to require a strict compliance with its provisions, then it should have no place in the Constitution. On this theory, it serves no other purpose than to blind and delude those who conscientiously look to the Constitution for guidance in their ecclesiastical duties and relations. But in all associations which profess to be governed by law, forms are things; sometimes, things of a most vital character. Forms are but the media through which principles act. The cry against technicalities, is that of an unreasoning mind. The disregard of adjusted forms unsettles every social and civil relation. And we have now the evidence amongst ourselves, that church relations may be equally thrown into anarchy and confusion by the contempt and disregard of rules and modes of action to which all have given their assent. It is by such disregard that minorities are oppressed, and the arbitrary will of majorities is made to supercede the provisions of written law. Indeed the only security which minorities have, is the faithfulness of majorities to their self-imposed obligations.

Thus much we deem it right to say, for the strenuousness with which we have opposed the informal, arbitrary proceedings of our brethren of the majority.

According then, to the irregular notice from the pulpit, on the 24th of May, the church organized for business after the prayer meeting on the evening of Tuesday, the 26th. Dr. A. S. Ball was appointed Chairman.

Mr. E. W. Chester opened the business of the evening by stating that the object of the meeting was to prepare for the Annual Meeting, when the officers of the church were to be elected. He therefore moved that a Committee be appointed to nominate these officers.

Mr. R. N. Havens objected to the passage of the Resolution, as it would be a departure from the uniform practice of the church during the entire eleven years of its existence, and its practical operation would be to throw the appointment of the officers into the hands of the two or three brethren who might chance to compose the nominating Committee.

Mr. Seth B. Hunt offered an amendment to the effect that a Committee of three be appointed to report at the next annual meeting what amendments to the Standing Rules, are, in their opinion, expedient; and also to submit the names of suitable persons for the office of deacons, as well as a list of officers for the ensuing year.

In explanation, Mr. Hunt said that the present condition of the church called for some action; and it was, he believed, generally conceded that it would be necessary to appoint *additional* Deacons.

Mr. Havens inquired, what was the object aimed at? Was it in contemplation merely to alter the number of Deacons; to throw out the present brethren and put others in their places; or to change the tenure of the office? As to adding to the number, that could be done by Resolution. If the object were to alter the terms of the Deaconate, he trusted that the church would vote down that proposition. Our present Rule was adopted after long and earnest discussion, the pastor of the church having done more to ensure its adoption, than any one member of the church. He could see no good reason at the present time for this subversion of our Rules.

Mr. Hunt said, that although Dr. Cheever had thus labored for the existing Rule, yet his experience for the past year led him to regret it; and he, Mr. Hunt, was authorized to say that Dr. Cheever had now changed his mind.

After further discussion, the motion as modified for the appointment of a Committee to report amendments to the Standing Rules &c., was carried.

Mr. E. W. Chester then read a list of proposed amendments to the Rules; in submitting which, he said that he did not believe that the Deacons now represented the church, but that he would not propose to remove them, but to add to their numbers.

Mr. Hunt expressed his astonishment, and ignorance of these propositions of Mr. Chester; and moved a reference of the paper to the Committee just appointed, which was done.

The Committee, as finally arranged, consisted of Messrs. Charles Abernethy, E. W. Chester and Charles R. Harvey. The meeting then adjourned to meet on Tuesday evening, June 2nd.

The adjourned meeting was held on the 2d of June, Dr. Ball in the chair.

Mr. Chester, from the Committee appointed May 26th, presented an abstract of the amendments proposed by the Committee to the Standing Rules; closing with the remark, that at the Annual Meeting the Committee would give their reasons for action under the present emergency. They also deferred reporting a list of nominees until that occasion.

The Annual Meeting was duly held on Thursday evening, June 4th.

Its proceedings are so fully set forth in the letter to members of the church which is hereinafter submitted from the signers of the communication to Dr. Cheever of April 27, that it is deemed unnecessary here to enlarge upon them. The important fact however should be stated, even at the expense of repetition, that the merits of the Report made by Mr. Chester, and the amendments to the Standing Rules recommended by the Committee and adopted, were not considered, even to the utterance of one word of comment, for or against either or any of them. Nor were they read but once; and on this solitary reading, without even the slightest examination, they were adopted in the gross, by a vote of 42 to 17; a sufficient number of

members, however, known to be opposed to them, to have prevented their adoption had they been present, being absent from the city. The struggle on the part of the minority, was to induce their brethren of the majority, simply to proceed according to the provisions of our Rules; but it was all in vain. Our appeals and remonstrances were heard; but they were both unanswered and unheeded.

A few days subsequent to the Annual Meeting a printed sheet, headed "Report and Action of the Church of the Puritans, upon the letter addressed to the pastor, Rev. George B. Cheever, D. D., asking him to resign his pastorate," was distributed to the members of the church at one of the weekly social meetings, and has also been extensively circulated throughout New England. This paper purports to give the letter of April 27th, to Dr. Cheever, but omits the names of the signers. It also gives a copy of the Report signed by Messrs. Abernethy, Chester and Harvey, but omits the proposed amendments to our Standing Rules.

It makes allegations respecting the signers, quite at variance with facts. But we are debarred from a further notice of this document, as it is put forth anonymously.

With a view to ensure the preservation of the Protest of the Deacons and of our Letter to the church on the Records, we procured a call for a special meeting on July 16th, by requisition of the Clerk, signed by the following members of the church.

ELISHA C. WILCOX,	WILLIAM ALLEN,
ELISHA PECK,	W. S. THOMPSON,
SAMUEL CHURCHILL,	J. WALTER CAMP,
WM. B. ISHAM,	JARED LINSLEY, M. D.
R. N. HAVENS,	EDWARD M. MORGAN,
L. N. COWLEY,	A. T. DWIGHT,
WILLIAM WAY,	W. R. DONAGHE, M. D.
O. E. WOOD,	J. COOKE, M. D.
E. M. KINGSLEY,	S. CONOVER, JR.
HENRY A. HURLBUT,	B. F. EASTMAN,
ALBERT CHESEBRO,	G. S. CHAPIN,
RICHARD BROWN,	E. J. OWEN,
J. K. JOHNSON,	F. E. MATHER,

● STEPHEN PAUL.

This was read by the pastor, from the pulpit on Sabbath, July 12th.

The members of the church responded to our invitation by their presence, and Mr. Wm. C. Gilman was called to the chair.

A ready and patient attention was yielded to the preliminary statements of Deacon Wood and to the protest of Deacons Wood, Kingsley and Johnson, which was read by him.

At the close, Mr. Havens asked on behalf of the signers of the letter of April 27th, that he be then permitted to lay before the church their Reasons for addressing that letter to the pastor. His request was denied.

Rev. Israel P. Warren then moved that the Protest of the Deacons be ordered on file, and that a Committee of five be appointed to consider and reply to it, if they deem it advisable.

After considerable discussion, and various proposals to amend, this Resolution was adopted in its original form.

Mr. Havens again renewed his application, stating that he acted by direction of the signers of the letter of April 27th, whose names he read, and asked the opportunity of submitting their Reasons to the church.

Mr. Mather moved that the signers have leave now to present and read their Reasons.

This Resolution occasioned a long debate; pending which, Mr. F. W. King proposed an amendment to the effect that on Dr. Cheever's return, the church would receive any respectful communication these brethren might wish to make.

This was opposed by several members, on the ground that it was unbecoming the church to pledge itself to receive a paper, of the contents of which they were ignorant.

The Rev. B. N. Martin, (who had been a member just *four* days,) then submitted the following Preamble and Resolution, as a substitute for Mr. King's motion:

"Whereas, This church has already, by a deliberate vote expressed its judgment upon the action of the signers of the letter which requested the resignation of our pastor, therefore,

"*Resolved*, That while as a church we are ever ready to entertain any proper paper or remarks which any member may desire to submit to our consideration, we cannot receive from those gentlemen any statement reflecting upon the pastor."

Finally, the whole subject was laid on the table by a vote of 46 to 19; quite a number of members in the minority declining to vote, in consequence of the chairman refusing to entertain a call for the ayes and noes.

We have thus been denied the right universally recognised as fundamental and inalienable by the civil law, of answering to the allegation of wrong doing. By no formal vote, either at a regular or irregular meeting, has the church ever intimated a wish to know why we addressed the pastor on the subject of his resignation. They have refused to give us any assurance that they would hear us at any future day. Yet in a variety of ways, and by different speakers, they claim to have already condemned our proceeding.

We are shut up therefore to the necessity of using the Press to present to the eyes of our brethren, things to which they would not open their ears. We do not prefer this medium of access to their understanding and their judgment. Having however, succeeded in bringing ourselves thus into

direct contact with their conscience, all we have now to ask of them is, "Judge righteous judgment."

We precede our own Letter to the Members of the Church, and the Protest of the Deacons, with the Report of Messrs. Abernethy, Chester and Harvey, made at the Annual Meeting.

R E P O R T .

The Committee to whom was referred the subject of amending the Standing Rules of the Church of the Puritans, respectfully report :—

That they have looked carefully at these rules, as they have existed for some years. They find a small number of these in need of amendments, not of great importance, but yet such as the convenient transaction of business seems to require. Indeed, the proposed amendments do little more than conform the rules to the practice of the church.

The only rule of great importance, whether considered on general principles, or with reference to the present necessities of the church, is the one from which a life tenure is inferred in the deaconship.

Such a tenure implies rule rather than representation. This is not in happy accordance with the fundamental constitution of Congregationalism. According to this all the power of the church resides in the body. Whoever is appointed to perform any service, acts by authority of the body, and as its representative. His is a delegated power, in the exercise of which he is responsible to his constituents.

The evil of a life-tenure, or a tenure which can be terminated only by a direct vote of displacement—always delicate, and usually regarded as a hostile act—is that the deacons of the church often come to feel themselves a distinct order, having an authority beyond the functions of their office, a right to lead the opinion and the action of the church, and to expect a deference on account of their official position. In the infirmities of our nature this tendency is unavoidable.

Another and cognate evil is, that deacons, though they may represent the sentiment and will of the church when appointed, may cease entirely to represent the sentiment and wishes of the present.

The changes in our cities of the membership of a church are rapid, and deacons come to be in a very few years the representatives of a past generation. When a large proportion of the present members have had no voice in their election, they are likely to look upon them as official persons, and not as representatives of the church in living sympathy with its pulsations.

It is of importance to accustom as large a number of members as practicable to the discharge of the duties belonging to the deaconship. The proportion of those fitted for such duties will depend much on the demand for them, and the demand will be increased by the necessity of periodical changes.

Your Committee deem it wise to render deacons ineligible for one year after their term expires. If eligible, a reelection will be expected, and if not accorded, the omission will be regarded as a censure. The same persons must be continued for fear of wounding feelings, when a change would be expedient. These are reasons which induce your Committee, on general principles, to advise a short term of office and ineligibility.

But there are considerations which render it specially important to apply these principles in this church at the present time. And your Committee

deem it the part of Christian frankness to declare, without disguise, yet in all courtesy, the reasons why they believe what is fit and wise at all times as to this office, is of imperative necessity in this church and at this time.

It is well known that our deacons, without invoking the advice, or consulting the wishes of the church, have attempted to drive its pastor to a resignation. The letter addressed to him by these and others has been laid before the church, and, through the press, has become known to the community. It is irregular, partisan, and unjust to the church. Two, at least, of the deacons are generally understood to have been active in getting this up and in procuring signatures. The church cannot safely confide in men, as its representatives, who thus seek, of their own will, and without the voice of the church, or even calling for an open expression of its wishes, to sunder the ties of pastor and people.

But, aside from the impropriety of the proceeding in its very nature, there are objections to it at this time of gravest import.

In the midst of abounding treason against God and humanity, of silent consenting, or of striking hands with the oppressor, there are ministers in this city who stand up unfaltering in the power of truth and the gospel. All honor to such. Their outspoken words shall go down to future ages. They are doing their part to redeem the nation from error and falsehood and wickedness and shame. They know too well that this redemption will never come from political parties without a holier fire in the heart than can be caught from the fitful torch-light of expediency. To these political parties present success is everything. Not so with those who proclaim to the understanding and the heart the great truths of righteousness. They know that these truths belong to God and are lasting as his throne. They fight a battle with a certainty of victory, though a thousand fall at their side and ten thousand at their right hand.

Among the champions of right against wrong—of the oppressed against the oppressor—of Christian principle against selfish cupidity—the pastor of this church has taken a prominent stand. Here, on Union Square, in the heart of the city, he has fought the battle against Slavery, its abettors and apologists, with a brave heart. With powers of logic and illustration rarely matched, raised up by God to do a work for the nation, for mankind, and for the age, he has sent his thunder-tones from the Atlantic to the Pacific—from our northern to our southern border—calling men to be true to themselves and to their God—holding up to scorn, contempt, and loathing, the principles and sentiments which brand our nation with infamy, and make it a reproach among all people. His tones have reverberated beyond the Atlantic, stirring the best blood of the heart, wherever that heart is true to freedom.

God has honored the pulpit of this church, by making it a great watch-tower for the nation. Its guardians have a duty to perform before the world. All eyes turn to us to inquire whether we will be faithful to our trust. It is ours to shield, to sustain, and to encourage the man whom we have placed in this pulpit. Shall we ask of a heartless despotism—of those who, in the stolidity of their hearts, fear not God nor regard man—leave for our pastor to speak for right, for truth, for equity? Are we so lost to manly courage as to take counsel of our fears?

Dr. Cheever is pastor of this church; but he is more. His mission extends beyond the little precincts of Union Square. He is a watchman on the walls of our American Zion, proclaiming truths to the nation—truths as enduring as eternity. A little hamlet of Germany—a contracted parish in Edinburgh—might as well have claimed Luther and Knox for their sole property, as this church the man who stands in its pulpit.

His mission extends wide beyond the precincts of a little parish. Through him and in him we owe a duty to the nation—the duty of upholding, sustaining, and encouraging. And to this sentiment of duty this church, before the eyes of Christendom, watched and noted by the good and the wise—nay, by the tyrannic and the wicked—this church, set, by the power and God-given fidelity of its pastor, on a pinnacle so high, will not, can not, be false. Your Committee call on you, brethren, to dare and to do whatsoever God in his providence shall demand of you.

The great mistake of the fifteen or twenty men who have attempted to remove the pastor of this church from his pulpit and his people, is this, that they have never measured themselves and their pastor by the right standard—have never considered his mission either in its breadth, or height, or depth; in its reach of power, or the greatness of our nation's need. They profess to sympathize with him in his principles, and yet, so far as on them depends, they would hush his voice in silence. They would honor him for his fidelity to truth, but would drive him from our midst.

Well, it was possible that these mistaken brethren, acting in secret conclave, might prevail. They believed they could. They attempted the task—whether successful or in vain, this church must say. Dr. Cheever can afford to be driven out from the midst of us—to go naked, penniless, friendless. Of his honor as the champion of liberty and right—as the messenger of God to the nation—he will go unshorn. He has made a mark which we can not blot out. He has proclaimed truths which shall live when we are forgotten. He can afford to be driven out. And we, too, brethren, can afford to be scattered, all of us—to go down, one by one, to the silent grave; or, if God so will, to be dashed by some sudden calamity, all of us together, from earthly life. Pastor and people can afford to go down together to the grave, to be buried in the ruins of the edifice where we worship. Like a pebble dropped in mid ocean, the tiny circles marking for a brief moment the place where it fell, and then ships with their living freight pass on, all unconscious that aught had disturbed the waters.

But can we afford the other? Can we afford to seem to the world false to all the principles we profess to honor? Can we face the reproaches of the just, the brave, the large-hearted, throughout the world? Can we afford to leave our children to blush for our cowardice? Can we afford them the legacy of a dishonored name?

Brethren, these things we can not afford. Let us gather round our pastor. Let our hearts beat in unison with his, warming, cherishing, upholding him. Let us, at least, go down in memory with him to posterity as not unworthy the man whom God, in his providence, has set in our midst. And so may God succeed us, as we are true to Him and to the cause of the oppressed. Respectfully submitted.

E. W. CHESTER,
CHARLES ABERNETHY, } Committee.
CHARLES R. HARVEY, }

NEW YORK, Thursday, June 4, 1857.

The amendment introduced into the Standing Rules, relative to Deacons, is in these words: "From and after the present Annual Meeting the number of Deacons shall be six. They shall be elected at the present meeting; two of them for one year, two for two years and three for three years. At each future Annual Meeting, two shall be chosen for three years in the place of the two whose time shall then expire. Vacancies occurring before the end of the term, are to be filled only for the remainder of it. At the expiration of their terms of office, Deacons are ineligible for one year."

PROTEST
OF DEACONS WOOD, KINGSLEY AND JOHNSON.
—
TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF THE
PURITANS :

DEAR BRETHREN:—We the undersigned, Officers of the Church of the Puritans, feeling ourselves aggrieved by the action of the Church, at its late annual meeting, in the adoption of the report signed by brothers Chester, Abernethy, and Harvey, and with a view to the alteration of the Standing Rules in accordance therewith, hereby submit to the Church, and ask to have entered on the Record our respectful and solemn protest.

We protest against said action :

First—As *illegal, null and void*, inasmuch as the meeting at which the amendments were originally proposed, was itself illegal, not having been properly called, by a requisition upon the Clerk, as expressly provided for in the rules for such cases, and consequently the proceedings referred to, were in direct violation of the rules established by the Church for the transaction of business.

We protest against it :

Secondly—As *revolutionary and dangerous*, being an unwarrantable subversion of another and fundamental article of the Church Constitution, (third,) by which the office of deacon was made not less permanent than that of pastor, viz : “The permanent officers of this Church shall be a pastor, or pastors and deacons.”

We protest against it :

Thirdly—As *unjust and detrimental* to a portion of the permanent officers of the Church, vacating their offices, as it does, by an *ex post facto* rule, without their consent, and in violation of the rules under which they accepted office, and that too, without formal charges or trial, and with no valid reason for such procedure. [See Art. 10, Standing Rules.]

We protest against it :

Fourthly—As *unscriptural* and *unchristian* in virtually and by implication, disciplining and censuring the officers, without notification or privilege of trial, for alleged offences, as the rules of the Church and Christian fellowship require.

We protest against it :

Fifthly—As singularly *inconsistent* and *irreconcilable*, not only with the practice and principles of this Church from its foundation, but especially with its action on a former occasion, when the identical rules, now subverted, (or attempted to be,) were, after a thorough discussion, deliberately established, the present pastor taking part in the discussion, and contributing to that result, by his earnest advocacy of the measure from the pulpit.

We protest against it :

Sixthly—As directly contrary to the well established principles and usages of the Congregational Churches in the United States, as well as to the general principles of government in the Christian Church, almost without exception.

Seventhly—We protest against not only the leading position taken in the Report, but equally against the arguments adduced in support of it;—against the allegation that permanency of office “is not in happy accordance with the fundamental constitution of Congregationalism,” as without a shadow of support either in the practice of Congregational Churches past or present, (with an isolated exception or two,) in the history of the Christian Church from the beginning, or in the teachings of the New Testament itself:

Against the argument from the alleged difficulty of removing officers by trial and *deposition* for just cause, as unfounded in fact, and tending to establish a method of discipline, unprecedented and dangerous, and by no means recognized by our Saviour in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew :

Against the argument also “that it is of importance to accustom as large a number of members as practicable to the discharge of the duties belonging to the deaconship,” and the conclusion “that the proportion of those fitted for such duties, will depend much on the *demand* for them,” as degrading

the office, and making it a mere object of ambition, to be regulated by the commercial rule of "*demand and supply*:"

In short, against the consideration that *life tenure* implies "rule" rather than "representation," or representation of the "past" rather than of the "present," and others of like tenor; against these we *protest*, not only as fallacious in themselves, but as aiming a direct and fatal blow against the permanency and stability of the *pastoral* office itself, which, both in the New Testament and Congregational usage, stands precisely on the same footing as the deaconship, as respects permanency ;—a course of reasoning which virtually reduces the permanent pastor to a mere stated supply, and the office of deacon to that of a temporary Church committee; and what is worse, in the present instance, to a committee ineligible to re-election, however "good a degree" they may have "purchased to themselves."

We *protest* against the Report further as laboring to place the brethren whom it censures in a false position before the Church and community—constantly assuming or asserting, in opposition to fact, that they are hostile to freedom of speech and of the pulpit, and unwilling that the Christian pastor should perform his whole duty, "rightly dividing the word of truth" and applying it to every species of iniquity among men, whether private or public.

We *protest* against it likewise as wrongfully *misstating* the *position* and *misinterpreting* the *motives* of the brethren whom it condemns, and as unwarrantably holding up their conduct as factious, and their professions in respect to it as insincere and unworthy of confidence.

We *protest, finally*, against the assumption throughout that the difficulties which have so unhappily arisen in the Church and Society had their origin primarily or mainly in the faithfulness of the pastor, in advocating the great principles of freedom and right; on the contrary, we fully believe that his recent efforts on the subject of slavery have served not only to strengthen him in his position, but have prevented an earlier outbreak of dissatisfaction.

While we thus by our earnest protest oppose what we regard as wrong in the action referred to, and seek to make known to the brethren—with many of whom we have so long walked in friendly and Christian intercourse—how deeply we feel aggrieved by it, we are disposed, nevertheless, to make due allowance for the widely different views which, through *human infirmity*, equally good men sometimes entertain on the same subject ; and hence would neither rashly judge the motives nor unnecessarily wound the sensibilities of those whose action we cannot but regard as hasty, inconsiderate and ill advised—no less so, certainly, than that which they assume to censure on our part—and as greatly lacking in that Christian courtesy and kindness towards us, which it is our prayer to the Great Head of the Church, that we may never fail to exercise towards all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The second standing rule of our Church provides, “that this Church will extend to and receive from other Evangelical Congregational Churches that fellowship, advice and assistance which the laws of Christ require. It holds itself bound to regard the decisions of mutual councils and to seek the promotion of peace and brotherly love with all the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

In accordance with this rule we ask that you will now unite with us in calling a mutual council at an early day, to which this action of the Church, so important as well as unjust to us, may be referred.

Requesting again that this our solemn protest may be entered at length on the record of the Church, and wishing grace, mercy and peace to be multiplied to you all—

We remain your brethren in Christ,

G. E. WOOD,	57 Broadway,	} Deacons.
E. M. KINGSLEY,	38 Park Place,	
J. K. JOHNSON,	63 Pearl street.	

NEW YORK, July 7th, 1857.

LETTER

FROM THE SIGNERS OF THE COMMUNICATION OF APRIL 27, 1857.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF THE
PURITANS.

DEAR BRETHREN:—On the 11th of May last, the undersigned, in connection with the three deacons of our Church, delivered to our pastor a letter, of which, for your information and guidance, we here give you a transcript. It was as follows:

NEW YORK, April 27, 1857.

REV. GEORGE B. CHEEVER, D.D.

DEAR SIR:—The undersigned members of the church and congregation of the Church of the Puritans, after a prayerful consideration of the condition of the church, and its relations to yourself, are painfully convinced that the spiritual interests both of the pastor and the people, as well as the stability and prosperity of the society, will be promoted by a dissolution of our connection.

It is not without extreme reluctance, therefore, that we now suggest to you the expediency of a tender of your resignation of the pastorate. By the adoption of this course, pleasant recollections of our Christian fellowship will be maintained. A dissolution, which seems to us inevitable, will lose its sting. The intercourse of the future, as Providence may permit it, will be free from painful memories of the past.

We do not dwell on the reasons which impel us to the suggestions we make. It is sufficient that the infirmities and diversities of human nature often indicate separation as the rule of peace, when an enforced union could but result in growing alienation of heart.

That you may not, however attribute our suggestions to the wrong cause, we assure you that we all sympathize in your views of the freedom of the pulpit; and the duty as well as the right, of its ministers, at proper times and occasions, to discuss before their people all questions affecting or involving moral truth.

Ever invoking for you and yours the blessing of the Great Head of the Church, and with fervent prayers for your growing influence for good, so long as the Master shall spare you to work in his vineyard,

We remain, dear sir, your friends and brethren,

A. CHESEBRO,
J. N. BRADLEY,
S. J. BACON,

J. K. JOHNSON,
J. LINSLEY, M. D.
R. N. HAVENS,

S. T. HYDE,
STEPHEN PAUL,
L. N. COWLEY,
O. E. WOOD,
D. HODGMAN,
E. M. KINGSLEY,
A. T. DWIGHT,
H. A. HURLBUT,

RICHARD BROWN,
CHAS. TAYLOR,
WILLIAM WAY,
S. CONOVER, JR.
E. J. OWEN,
J. WALTER CAMP,
CHAS. H. ISHAM,
F. E. MATHER.

This letter was not sent, but after prayerful and deliberate consultation. It was not the device or the act of a moment. The request it preferred was not the result of recent or immediately preceding occurrences. Nor was the cause of it to be found in a single indiscretion, a sudden, overpowering temptation, a solitary sermon, or in any particular series of pulpit discourses.

The propriety, not to say necessity, of a change in the pastorate, had been for a period of two years or more, the subject of frequent, often of earnest remark, with members of the church; not only those whose names are appended to the letter, but with some who have been active and prominent in their opposition to the course now taken by the signers, and with many others who have left the church rather than be involved in unpleasant controversies with their pastor.

But the undersigned and their associate signers, believing that their obligations were rather to the church than to the pastor; that duty, however unpleasant, was imperative, even where ease prompted to its omission; that in the service of Christ we are bound by our covenant relations to know no man after the flesh; yet with feelings of entire kindness towards our pastor personally, and in language and terms designed to be courteous and not unworthy the character of Christians, suggested the propriety of his tendering the resignation of his office to the church.

Our object in communicating our views by letter was threefold: First, we desired to remove the impression from his mind, that the discontent in the church—of the existence of which he was aware—was not serious in its character,

and was restricted to two or three individuals; second, if successful in convincing him of these facts, we desired that he might have the opportunity of himself initiating before the church the proposal for his retirement, or perchance of so modifying his ministrations as to remove existing difficulties, and awaken anew the love and confidence which animated us all, as together we laid the foundation stones and raised the walls of our Bethel; and third, we aimed to avoid the public controversy, with its almost inevitable alienations and heart-burnings, of a church council.

To assure his reception and consideration of the letter in a corresponding spirit, we presented it to him by a Committee, who called his attention to its informal character, and indicated the medium through which he might reply to our suggestions.

Great then was our surprise when, at the close of the morning service on the first ensuing Sabbath, our pastor informed not only the church, but the strangers and the indiscriminate congregation assembled within our walls, of his receipt of the letter, and invited a meeting for its consideration, in such terms and manner as could not fail to secure the presence of a curious and excited crowd. And such, in fact, was the result. And more still: a notoriety has thus been given to the proceedings, which, if it subserves no other purpose, will at least summon as spectators to the issue now forced upon us, Christians of all names and of every clime, and sinners everywhere who delight to "eat up the sins of God's people." The thing which we aimed to avoid is forced upon us; and a public exposure of the reasons which influenced us and our associates in our action has become necessary. The course which we designed for peace has been made an occasion for strife. Whether it shall in the end prove that with wise forecast we counted the cost, or that we spake unadvisedly with our lips, is now to be determined. Conscious, however, of our integrity of purpose, we now place before you some of the facts and reasons on which we acted.

It has been quite magisterially charged upon us that "we have never measured ourselves nor our pastor by the right standard."* We will not stop by the way to comment on the self-sufficiency of the assumption manifested in the utterance of this judgment; but will give you the standard by which we venture to form an opinion as to the duties and obligations of a Christian pastor. It is right that we do this here, as it is by this standard we have been governed in our actions.

The great Apostle to the Gentiles, on his way from Philippi to Jerusalem, when at Miletus sent for the elders of the Church at Ephesus. On their arrival, he gave them a charge as to their duties, prominent in which is this memorable injunction: "Take heed, therefore, unto yourselves and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the flock of God, which He hath purchased with his own blood;" the Apostle having in mind, it can scarcely be doubted, the thrice repeated command of the risen Savior to the Apostle Peter, "Feed my lambs, Feed my sheep."

What sheep these are that are to be fed, is plainly enough indicated—those over whom the Holy Ghost appoints elders for overseers. Small flocks they may be; their numbers very few; only lambs perchance; yet though feeble, weak, few or young, being the purchase of the blood of Christ, the oversight and care of even such, to a rightly regulated mind, ought to satisfy the highest and noblest ambition. Here we conceive lie the duties of the Christian minister—to the flock over which the Holy Ghost makes him an overseer. We know of no rule of interpretation by which such very plain directions can be construed to justify the dispersion of a pastor's energies, and the extension of his mission over an area not even restricted by the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans, the Lakes of the North and the Gulf of the South, but reaching "beyond the Atlantic;" in short, without any restriction

* These quotations, it may be well to note, are from the Report which may be found on page 10.

save "the nation, mankind, the age and the world," to the neglect of the few souls gathered within "the precincts of the little parish" whence he sends forth his "thunder tones." Nor do we comprehend that rule of interpretation, by which the calling of a miraculously anointed shepherd boy, from following the sheep of his father to be ruler over God's people, can be accommodated to sanction the soaring away of a Christian minister from the proper work of feeding the sheep and lambs over which the Holy Ghost has made him overseer, "to high pinnacles," thence to scatter his feed-grain over a nation. If we have failed properly to "consider the mission of our pastor, either in its breadth, or height, or depth; in its reach of power or the greatness of our nation's need," it is because we have no other line to stretch upon it, no other standard by which to measure it, no other plummet wherewith to sound it, than such as the Apostle gives us; nor have we yet seen the warrant by which he is commissioned to the nation, rather than to ourselves and our families. Even David laid aside the crook before he assumed the sceptre.

Besides this Scriptural standard of a pastor's functions, equally explicit is the revealed standard of personal character to which he is commanded to attain. Thus writes the same Apostle, whose words we have already quoted, to Timothy: "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men; apt to teach; patient; in meekness instructing those who oppose themselves."

Taught as we have been, from the cradle to the maturity of life, to go "to the law and the testimony" for our rule of judgment in all things, we have felt it our duty, under the pressure of present circumstances, there to seek for guidance and direction. Our rule and authority we have thus given you. It is now to be seen, in view of the facts which we present, whether we have misconstrued or misapplied the rule, or abused herein the right of private judgment.

ORIGIN, PROGRESS AND PRESENT CONDITION OF THE CHURCH OF THE PURITANS.

The Church of the Puritans was organized April 12, 1846, with forty-five members, received from seventeen churches, and of seven different denominations. Most of the members were just in the ripe vigor of their days. The majority of them were of New England origin. Trained up under a form of church government which the experience of two centuries and a half has proven to be peculiarly elevating on the individual character, teaching habits of self reliance, inculcating the formation and exercise of independent judgments in all things, whether connected with the church or the state, alike in personal, family or social life; they banded together with the determination to demonstrate the adaptedness of Congregationalism to the exigencies of Christian life in a large city, in direct and daily contact and contrast with other forms of Protestant church government, which withdraw the administration of affairs from the whole body of associated members, depositing and concentrating power in selected and, practically, self-perpetuating agencies. They were one in heart and purpose. They were perfectly harmonious in their choice of a pastor. Nothing, indeed, seemed wanting to secure, with the presence and blessing of the Great Head of the Church Universal, the success, expansion and permanency of their enterprise.

Dr. Cheever was installed as pastor on the 18th May, 1846. The site which was secured for the church edifice was unsurpassed by any other in the city. The concentration of the great thoroughfares at this point; the rapidity with which a new population was then settling in the immediate vicinity; and the want of other places of public worship for their accommodation;—all gave warrant to the belief that the church would speedily be filled. In their pastor they had every confidence; nay, proud of his acknowledged abilities, they did not doubt that multitudes would throng to enjoy the benefit of his ministrations.

How far their expectations have been realized the following facts will show:—

In the 1st year, 1846–7, the net increase of church members, both by letter and profession—deducting deaths and dismissals—was	-	-	-	66
In the 2d year, 1847–8,	do.	do.	-	92
Do. 3d year, 1848–9,	do.	do.	-	27
Do. 4th year, 1849–50,	do.	do.	-	32
Do. 5th year, 1850–1,	do.	do.	-	28
Do. 6th year, 1851–2,	do.	do.	-	33
Do. 7th year, 1852–3,	do.	do.	-	38
Do. 8th year, 1853–4,	do.	do.	-	11
Do. 9th year, 1854–5,	do.	do.	-	12
Do. 10th year, 1855–6,	do.	decrease	-	12
Do. 11th year, 1856–7,	do.	do.	-	12

And at the date of our annual meeting in June, 1857, there were but 351 members connected with the Church; of whom 40, at least, were but nominally such; consisting of missionaries and permanent absentees in various parts of the world. Of the remainder, many are not regular attendants upon the church services.

The state of the congregation for the last five years, including the present, is also shown by the number of pews rented and occupied in each year:—

On the main floor of the house, there are	-	-	-	148 pews.
In the galleries,	-	-	-	72 “
Total,	-	-	-	220 “

In which there are comfortable sittings for 1300 persons.

There were pews, in whole or in part, occupied at the date of the annual meeting in 1852,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	133
In 1853,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	133
In 1854,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	126
In 1855,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	111
In 1856,	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	109
In 1857.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	103

It should be stated in this connection, that a considerable number of pews were rented in the years 1855–6 and 1856–7, at rates very much under their assessed annual value.

At the annual meeting of the Society in March, 1857, only

32 pews were occupied by their owners; whilst 21 pews belonged to persons not connected with the church. Of the 67 pews owned by individuals, more than one half belong to those who sympathize with us. There have never been a half dozen pews rented in the galleries, in any one year since the erection of the church edifice. Of the gallery pews, it may not be amiss to remark, that they are lined and cushioned, and are in all respects as comfortable as those on the main floor.

Not in a single year, since the formation of the church, has its legitimate income from the rental of pews, been sufficient for its ordinary support; the total deficiency, apart from the \$3,000 contributed to the repairs and alterations of the building, having been over \$9,000.

Whilst our enterprize has thus been stagnant, if not retrograding, other churches, sufficiently convenient to the population from whom we might reasonably expect to draw a considerable membership, have been fully maintained; some of them, indeed, not being able to accommodate the members desirous of uniting with them. But we will institute no special or invidious comparisons. We rejoice in the success of these and all other enterprizes for building up Christ's kingdom. Our purpose is to ascertain the cause of our own comparative failure.

The inquiry will here very naturally occur, How has the church been sustained with so small an attendance?

At the time of the completion of the building, there remained upon it a mortgage of \$15,000, for part of its cost, falling due in 1853. Down to the same time, 1853, there had also accrued a debt of between \$3,000 and \$4,000, making the total debt over \$18,000. Principally through the indefatigable exertions of Theodore McNamee, Esq., then President of the Board of Trustees, but not now connected with the church, and of deacon O. E. Wood, this debt was paid off. Considerably more than one half of the amount was contributed by some of the signers of the letter of April 27, 1857, to Dr. Cheever, and by friends who sympathize with us in our present views and action. On the other hand, we cheerfully record the liberality

of Dr. Cheever himself in his contribution to the fund, and also the fact of his now holding three pews in the Church.

In 1855, we were again in debt over \$3,000. This also was raised by voluntary contributions; over two-thirds of the amount being paid by ourselves and friends. And again, in 1856, there was a deficiency to be provided for of about \$3,200; of this about one half was given by those who are now branded as disorganizers.

We would rather make no mention of these things. But when we are held up to the world "as mistaken brethren, acting in secret conclave," who would "drive" their pastor out "naked, penniless, friendless," we may confidently appeal to these facts, to rebut the unmerited reproach.

We have at all times rejoiced with our pastor, in whatever success, spiritual or temporal, has crowned our united labors. Hence it was, with sincere gratification, that in the spring of 1856, one of the deacons was able to allay much of the discontent which was already manifesting itself, by referring to the average annual addition to the church of about 13, on profession. It was then, too, made the subject of congratulation, that, although our income was insufficient for the support of the church, yet besides meeting the deficiency, the annual contributions to objects of Christian benevolence had risen to over \$10,000, chiefly through the active exertions of a few individuals. These statements greatly subdued the rising disaffection, and the funds needed for repairs on the building were promptly contributed.

Still, facts pressed upon us, leading the minds of the more thoughtful of our brethren to the inquiry whether our pastor was adapted to the work he had undertaken, of ministering to us in sacred things. There was a steadily diminishing attendance, both on the Sabbath and weekly services, except on special advertised occasions. Little or no interest was manifested in the church or its pastor by the children and youth of the congregation. There was a sad lack of vitality in the Sabbath Schools; which, indeed, were quite neglected by the pastor. Many of our earliest and most reliable

friends were leaving us ; friends on whose liberality we could count in all emergencies, as we could upon their presence whenever we met for prayer and praise. Saddest of all, too many were leaving, by reason of personal dissension with their pastor.

Whilst many had doubtless for some time seen and felt whither we were drifting, yet few would acknowledge the truth, even to themselves. At length, however, full expression was given to the feeling, at a business meeting of the society, in the spring of 1856 ; but one individual present expressing dissent.

We are now led to the inquiry, What are the causes of this condition of our church ?

It pains us to enter upon this investigation. To be faithful, we must refer to facts over which we would rather drop the mantle of oblivion. We would not open a leaf in the great record book of the past, whose revealings would cause even an emotion of regret. Yet how shall we escape or avoid the necessity ? We are impelled to it in self-defence. The cause of truth demands it. Our pastor himself, by the course which he has seen proper to adopt, seemingly requires it of us. Our duty is, first of all, to Christ and His church. The interests of His cause we must regard as paramount to all considerations of time or of earthly ties. But as we enter upon this investigation, we do not attempt to conceal from ourselves our own manifold shortcomings ; nor do we say that we may not, by our own lukewarmness in the Master's service, too often have failed to hold up the hands of our pastor in his trials and his duties. We do not deny that too often have we failed in that urgency at the Throne of Grace which would have secured both for him and for ourselves the blessing of the Spirit's converting and sanctifying presence. But whatever blame may justly attach to either or all of us, for want of faithfulness to our covenant obligations, this will neither excuse, palliate, or remove, that which has been injudicious, imprudent, neglectful or rash, in him who occupies

towards us the responsible relation of a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ.

First, then, as to his pulpit ministrations.

We have no Procrustean bed, by which to adjust the intellectual and emotional nature of a minister of Christ. Nor, indeed, would it be possible, even were it desirable, for a people thus to stretch or to cramp a pastor's mind or heart; especially if he be of an active, inquiring, impressionable character. Nevertheless, we claim it as the right of every congregation of Christian believers, to see to it that their pastor does not shun to declare the whole counsel of God; and that he does this in the spirit of Him who wept, as he announced to Jerusalem, "The things which belong to thy peace, are now hid from thine eyes!" It is the duty of the minister of Christ to proclaim the "severity" of God; but none the less so, and in conjunction with it, His "goodness."

Herein do we judge lies one chief cause of our pastor's want of success in his ministry. With all his skill in wielding the artillery of Sinai, and in launching forth the terrors of the law, he yet fails in the tender presentation of a Savior's sufferings and love, and the attractions of His cross, to dying men.

He has been so often engaged in warfare with various political sins of the times, that the denunciatory style in which he has accustomed himself to address his audiences on these topics, has, insensibly perhaps to himself, come to be characteristic of his ordinary ministrations; more especially, however, in his discourses to the indiscriminate Sabbath evening congregations.

The habit of denunciation, like all other habits, grows, and at last becomes dominant, by use. And when this exists in combination with the faculty of ridicule and satire, it is repulsive in the extreme. Such, unfortunately, is the case with our pastor. Whether it be sinners in general, or sinners in particular, who fall under his animadversions, they may be sent away angry with the preacher for the scorn, the vituperation, the ridicule, with which they have been visited, but not much inclined to fall in love with the truth, for the exhibition

of it to which they have listened. Nor has it been only liquor dealers, slave owners, "partisan judges," who have thus been held up in the pulpit of our church as the embodiment of all that is unholy and unclean. Our Episcopal friends, who, innocently enough, indulge in gowns and bands, and hold to three orders in the ministry, have too often been remarked upon in the same spirit.

Again ; no man occupying the position of a public teacher, that indulges in the habit to which we have referred, can fail sooner or later, to fancy himself a special messenger charged to utter forth Woe, woe, to the inhabitants of earth. It is a result as inevitable, as that power always grasps after that just beyond its reach. Hence, such a man will never find satisfaction, or feel that his mission is fulfilled, by contracting himself to small spheres, or limiting himself to the guidance and instruction of a few of the humble ones of earth. And this diversion of mind to outside matters, does in fact measurably incapacitate him for the minor and more homely duties of his station. His thoughts being occupied with the affairs of a continent, cannot readily be brought down to the familiar teachings of the conference room. And when he attempts it, the ruling theme of thought and of study, will unhappily, and often grotesquely, force itself into the very midst of the colloquial intercourse of the hour. Such, practically, has been the case with our pastor. And too often, as the members of the church cannot fail to remember, has he come amongst us at the weekly lecture, manifestly unprepared for the duties of the occasion ; filling up the allotted hour with rambling, unconnected and pointless remarks ; making up for this want of preparation, by long, desultory readings from the Sacred Scriptures, prompted in his selections, apparently, by the marginal references, which happen to be under his eye.

We think such ministrations unprofitable, and not at all calculated to edify "the body of Christ," or to win sinners to repentance.

We grieve to say that there have been other things in his public ministrations, even more objectionable still, if this be possible. He has used the pulpit to hold up to ridicule members

of his church, who have ventured to differ from him. And this, confessedly. It seems impossible to believe that a minister of Christ should thus far forget the duties and proprieties of his station; that, availing himself of the immunities of a pulpit, where no response is allowable, he should launch forth his invectives against those whose hands are tied, and whose mouths are shut. But such is the sad truth. If he has not called members of the church by name, he has so far indicated them by circumstances, that their brethren could not fail to recognize the designation. And he has done this, as he has admitted, for the express purpose of driving away those who were obnoxious to him, or protested against his arbitrary, denunciatory, course.

On Thanksgiving Day, in 1855, he spoke of one of the members of the church as "mean and contemptible," not mentioning his name, but under circumstances which left no doubt of the application. And when afterwards, the Prudential Committee requested him to meet the offended brother half way, with a view to reconciliation, he refused, saying that it was "beneath the dignity of his station."

After the meeting of the Society in 1856, when the money was subscribed to repair the church, and meet the deficiency of the treasury, when informed of the result of the endeavor, instead of expressing his thankfulness, or even congratulating his brethren, he replied, with peculiar emphasis of manner, "Now I'll give it to them!" and on the ensuing Sabbath morning, occupied the attention of his hearers, with his "muzzled ox sermon," as it has been called, abounding throughout with personalities, epithets, sarcasms and vituperation; thoroughly succeeding in the strange work of alienating from himself the affection and respect of many of his people.

Such epithets as "snakes in the grass," "rusty old guns," "rats," "barnacles," "bilge water," are but samples of the epithets which in this public manner, he has applied to some members of the church, of which he is the pastor.

We will not longer dwell on this unwelcome part of our duty.

Second.—Such a course on the part of a pastor most naturally calls forth remonstrance on the part of church officers, who feel in any degree the responsibility of their position ; and the deacons of our church have not, in this respect, been unfaithful to their trust. Instead, however, of being met by our pastor with docility and meekness, they have been rebuffed and abused. In short, the language and manner of the pulpit to sinners, *impersonally*, has been applied to them in the parlor, personally. One of them has been repeatedly and violently charged to his face with “falsehood.” And this term has been applied to him behind his back, within a brief hour of placing in his hands for distribution to the disciples of Christ, the emblems of His dying love.

To another of the deacons he has applied the term “treacherous,” and spoken of the third as a “malicious calumniator.”

Subsequently to the delivery of the “muzzled ox sermon,” to which we have referred, speaking of what he called “the few remaining disaffected ones in the congregation,” he said that he “intended to make it too hot for them.”

We will not multiply these evidences of his want of appreciation, not only of the common courtesies of life, but of that grace and suavity of speech and demeanor, so eminently requisite in one appointed to administer the Word to the flock of Christ.

And *Thirdly*, We are constrained to remark upon his assumption of arbitrary power in the administration of the affairs of the Church.

Congregationalism is not a hierarchical despotism. It has no independent priesthood. It is, in the broadest, truest sense of the word, a republic ; its affairs all passing under the eye and review of all the members. A Congregational pastor may not, therefore, without arrogance, assume to himself the right to originate measures of church polity, or arbitrarily to set aside the directions of his church, speaking through its regularly appointed organs.

From the organization of our church to the present day, there have been differences of opinion between our members, as to the expediency of holding the second service of the Sabbath on the afternoon or the evening. The pastor himself has uniformly preferred the evening; and it has been in the evenings, principally, that he has occupied himself with the exciting political topics of the day.

At a meeting of the Prudential Committee, about the month of November, 1856, when the question of evening services was considered, and one of the officers called his attention to the recorded proceedings of the church directing an afternoon service, Dr. Cheever replied that "*he would have* an evening service; that no power on earth should stop him from preaching in the evening; and that if the church wanted preaching in the afternoon, they must get other supplies than he could furnish."

And it was observed that when the service was held in the afternoon, by direction of the church, it seemed as though he so conducted it as purposely to divest it of interest, in order to drive the church back to the evening service.

Just as little heed was paid by him to the wishes of the Prudential Committee in relation to the management of the Bible Class, in the spring of 1856. This class had been for some time previous conducted by Prof. Howard Crosby. Circumstances seemed to indicate to him the propriety of his retiring; but on the special request of the Committee, the pastor being present, he consented to continue the service. Dr. Cheever immediately directed the clerk of the church to notify Prof. Crosby that he would take charge of the class himself; but the clerk declining to deliver so discourteous a message, directly in the face of the resolution of the Committee, Dr. Cheever went to the class when in session, and there so conducted himself as to compel Prof. Crosby at once to retire. Soon after, Mr. Crosby left the church.

At the annual meeting of the church in 1856, Dr. Cheever assumed the chair, without vote or invitation; and on his attention being drawn by a member present, to the Standing

Rule which directs the calling of the church to order by the clerk, and the nomination and election of a moderator by the church, he acknowledged the Rule, but continued to preside. To avoid a public altercation, the question was dropped. At the same meeting, he ruled the sufficiency of a plurality of votes to elect members of the Prudential Committee; and when directed to the uniform usage of the church to require a majority to elect, he paid no regard to the statement, but insisted on the correctness of his ruling. Under this ruling, the only member of the Prudential Committee who has sustained Dr. Cheever in his arbitrary proceedings, was then elected, by a mere plurality vote.

Without further multiplying details, it may suffice here to say, that his overbearing treatment of the officers of the church, and utter disregard of their wishes and representations, has led a number of them to seek other and more congenial church relations. He has shown no spirit of conciliation or compromise, towards those who have at various times expostulated with him on his conduct.

You will thus see, Christian brethren, that our reasons for addressing the letter of April 27, 1857, to Dr. Cheever, may be classified under four heads:

- 1—The condition of the church, under his pastorate, both as to its numbers and its finances;
- 2—The character of his public ministrations;
- 3—His uncourteous and bitter mode of speech towards those who do not coincide with his administration of the duties of his office; and his impatience of all admonition;
- 4—His assumption of arbitrary power, in the affairs of the church.

And you will especially observe that none of these reasons are such as have been assigned, as prompting our communication, by Dr. Cheever himself, and by Messrs. Charles Abernethy, E. W. Chester, and Charles R. Harvey, in their Report presented at the recent annual meeting.

In relation to the attempt made by the pastor to hold up to

the church and the public, the Slavery issue, as the ground work of our action, we are constrained to say that it has greatly excited our wonder. Of the existence of the dissatisfaction in the church, Dr. Cheever has been long aware. Repeated representations have been made to him to this effect, though he has steadily professed to doubt their correctness. We presume that this letter to you will dissipate his doubts as to the cause of our action.

We must confess our surprise that two of the brethren who signed the Report, should not have first inquired into the truthfulness of their allegations against the deacons of the church and ourselves. And of the third, it pains us to say that he not only knew our motives, but approved them, and signed the letter himself, as "the Doctor's best friend," to use his own expression; although he subsequently erased his signature.

Can the brethren of that Committee honestly say that they have not borne false witness against us?

We do not feel ourselves called upon to express our opinions on an issue which we have not created; or rather, which we have expressly repudiated. Nevertheless, to avoid misrepresentation or misapprehension, thus much we will say, in regard to the vexed question of Slavery and the relations of the pulpit thereto. We adhere then, to the terms of our letter to Dr. Cheever; that we hold the pulpit free "to discuss all questions affecting or involving moral truth." We hold no opinions which we are not willing to have subjected to the most thorough and searching scrutiny and analysis, so that it be honestly made; and thus do we claim it as our privilege to investigate the opinions of others. So then, we do not object to the discussion of the Slavery question. But we do not believe, that good is to be gained to the cause of Freedom by violent objurgation, by abusive epithets, by elaborate sarcasm, by impetuous denunciation, though piled mountain high on its opposers. "Speaking the truth in love," we think a better way of securing love for the truth.

The pulpit, at any rate, we do not think the place for the fulmination of such rhetorical artillery; whatever necessity or propriety there may be, if any, for this mode of conducting the

warfare on the common and open battle field of the press. Nor, until the command, "thus saith the Lord," is as direct and personal to the Christian minister, as it was to Moses, Jeremiah, Ezekiel or John, or until he can speak with like divine intuition and authority as the Lord Jesus Christ, do we think it his right to denounce those who differ from him on questions of morals or politics, as "hypocrites," "whited sepulchres, full of dead mens' bones and all uncleanness," or to threaten them with the vengeance of Jehovah.

Nor do we believe that our church is to be built up and strengthened by the constant intrusion of so exciting a theme into the ears of its members, out of season as well as in season, in the ordinary services of the sanctuary, and in the prayers, exhortations and talks of the Conference Room. There are other things and themes of more direct and pressing importance to us and our families. We drop this subject.

Our letter to Dr. Cheever was placed before you. A series of events has grown out of this fact, too important in their character and bearing to be passed without notice or comment.

But first, we must ask your attention to some circumstances connected with these subsequent events, which confirm the correctness of our judgment on the preceding occurrences to which we have already invited your attention.

These subsequent

CONFIRMATORY CIRCUMSTANCES,

we now briefly recapitulate.

1. The public use made by our pastor of our letter of April 27th. The whole tenor of that communication, and the mode of its presentation to him—as we have before had occasion to remark—both indicated our expectation of a courteous private reply, and our wish for friendly conference. Instead of this, we were, in the face of the congregation, in manner, if not in terms, defied to a trial of strength and numbers.

2. At the meeting which he thus invited, our pastor was

present, listening to discussions of which himself was the subject ; ready, as the event proved, to mingle in the strife, if occasion presented.

It was on this occasion, when deacon Wood, speaking of a letter which had been prepared by himself and other brethren relative to the spirit with which the editorial controversies of some of our religious newspapers had been conducted, and which was published about the month of September, 1855, remarked, "When Prof. Crosby and I called on Dr. Cheever, and read him the letter, he said that he would sign it, if we would address it also to the Evangelist, and Prof. Crosby is my witness," Dr. Cheever sprang up, and, with great warmth of manner, retorted, "I never said any such thing," occasioning calls to order from many in the meeting. Whether deacon Wood did or did not speak the truth—of the fact that he did, however, he has unimpeachable evidence—we yet cannot but think that our pastor's manner of reply was not becoming in one who should be "a pattern" to the flock.

3. At a subsequent (informal) meeting of the church, held on the 5th May last, when the proposal was first made to modify the standing rules of the church, so as to depose the deacons who had become obnoxious to the pastor by their faithfulness and independence, it was announced by brother Seth B. Hunt that he was authorized to say that Dr. Cheever approved the course that was recommended ; and this was established beyond all denial at the annual meeting by his presence, and by the countenance which he gave to its strange, disorganizing proceedings. We shall presently be compelled to recur, and more fully, to this point. Here we refer to it as an incident confirming our judgment on his previous conduct in office. ●

4. In the same defiant manner, in which he has heretofore treated his people, on the occurrence of anything not consistent with his ideas of the submissiveness becoming in those who were merely "occupants of pews," immediately after the annual meeting he delivered his "David sermon ;" printed in the "Independent" newspaper of the ensuing week,

with a textual, in fact with a literal, punctuate accuracy, marking its reporter as a consummate adept in his profession. Had it indeed, been copied from the manuscript of the author, it could not have been more true to the original. This sermon, it is scarcely necessary to say, to those who heard it, or to those who read it, displays the same arrogant assumption of power and authority for his pulpit, and the same marked disregard, not to say contemptuous treatment, of his people, which characterized the "muzzled ox sermon;" and in it were likewise to be found the same unwarrantable quotations and comments on remarks made to him in private conversation.

5. At a meeting of the Prudential Committee on the 24th June, deacons Wood, Kingsley and Johnson, presented themselves by their right of office; not acknowledging the lawfulness of the proceedings of the annual meeting, and never having been notified of their deposition.

On entering the room, deacon Wood, addressing the pastor as the lawful moderator of the meeting, said,

"Dr. Cheever, we have called to ask you, as chairman of the Prudential Committee, if you consider the action of the church, at its annual meeting, as vacating our office as deacons?"

To which enquiry Dr. Cheever replied, "I do, most undoubtedly."

Mr. Wood then said, "We consider the action of the church towards us, as its officers, as revolutionary, unjust and contrary to its principles and rules, without our resignation or deposition after trial." The deacons then retired.

When passing out of the house, Dr. Cheever said to these brethren, that the action of the church "was entirely revolutionary according to the rules, and that it was designed from the start, to displace the deacons."

If this frank avowal does not bring the pastor and those who thus "designed" with him, into the attitude of conspirators against the peace and harmony of the church of Christ, against the respect and veneration always due to law, against the characters, influence and good name of Christian

brethren, invested with high and holy functions—then are we at a loss how to estimate the moral bearing and relations of any act evidently devised and executed in the spirit of the unholy maxim, that “the end justifies the means.”

Thus much have we to say of circumstances transpiring since the delivery of our letter of April 27th, and which we conceive do most fully demonstrate the correctness of our judgment on antecedent events.

Here would we fain rest. Our task thus far has made us sick at heart. And could we, with justice to the cause of truth and righteousness, here close our appeal and vindication, most gladly would we drop the pen. But the collateral matters growing out of the use made of our letter to the pastor, are scarcely second in importance to the question we submitted to him. To these we must now address ourselves.

OF THE ANNUAL MEETING.

You are aware, dear brethren, that our pastor, announcing the annual meeting of the Church, in the month of June, urged the attendance of all, both males and females. You are aware, too, that the call was heeded, according to his wish; and that there were present, not only a large portion of the female members of the Church, but many strangers. And not these alone, but that reporters were there from the secular press of our city; and that the proceedings of this meeting have been published far and wide. Our doings have thus gone before the whole world for revision and judgment. A necessity is therefore laid upon us, to see that the record and history of that hour be true and impartial.

We invite your attention then, first of all, to the singular ruling and conduct of the Chair. An unsettled clergyman, who had but quite recently connected himself with our church, was selected as the presiding officer of the evening.

The pastor of the church, who was present at the organization of the meeting, having left temporarily, the chairman, although properly requested, refused to call upon one of the dea-

cons who was present, for the Annual Report of the Prudential Committee, assigning as his excuse, the absence of the pastor, who is the Chairman of that Committee; and after his return to the meeting, the chairman, when his attention was again called to this matter, still persisted in his refusal.

The provision of the 6th Standing Rule, that the records of the last year shall be read at the Annual Meeting, was thus arbitrarily set aside; and information, which ought first of all to have been placed before us, for guidance in the duties of the occasion, and without which we could not legislate intelligently on any subject, was entirely withheld from the church. This record, by the 3d and 5th rules, is designed to furnish the church with a statement of its condition and its history during the year, a chronological list of members, &c.

The 6th rule provides that at the annual meeting, the catalogue of members shall be revised. To this duty the attention of the chair was also invited; but he persistently refused to call the church to the performance of it, alleging for his justification, that the records were not there; for which, as we have just stated, he refused to ask. We were thus debarred the opportunity at a subsequent stage of the proceedings, of calling for the ayes and noes.

He was in haste, however, to say to the meeting, that the Special Committee appointed at a previous (irregularly called) meeting of the church would present their "Report." Having succeeded in forcing this business upon the meeting, he arbitrarily refused to pay the slightest attention to the question of its reception, which was raised by a member of the church, deciding that this never was considered in parliamentary practice. How far this ruling is in conformity with parliamentary law, may be seen by reference to Sec. 27 of Jefferson's Manual, where it is distinctly laid down that when the chairman of a committee offers a report "he or any other member may move that it now be received." This motion always legitimately opens up every consideration affecting the propriety of action on a report.

Pending the discussion on its adoption, in reply to an in-

quiry, he said that the motion would be first on the adoption of the "Report" proper, and that afterwards the question would come up separately on the adoption of the amendments proposed to the Standing Rules; but when the adoption was carried, he then ruled that the vote carried all these amendments! The discussion having been conducted with sole reference to the formality of the antecedent proceedings, not one word was then said, nor was there a chance afforded for it to be said, for or against the amendments proposed by the "Committee."

Here it is also proper to remark, that so careless was he of the manifest duties of his station, that he allowed, or at least overlooked, the withdrawal of the "Report" from the table and the meeting,* by which occurrence it happened that the meeting acted upon this document after but one solitary reading even of the radical amendments proposed to the Standing Rules, and when it was not, in fact, even before them, for reference and information. Apart from the select few who had been concerned in the concoction of this document, it may be safely said that the church did not know upon what they were voting. Whether this be the usage of the Congregational churches of New England, we are not informed. We should rather suppose that in all well-regulated associations, religious or otherwise, there or elsewhere, such proceedings would be considered somewhat arbitrary and loose.

To still another outrage on all propriety, and on the rights of the minority, we must ask your attention. The Chair utterly refused to suffer a call of the yeas and nays on the adoption of this "Report." Thus, although it now appears by the minutes that the amendments to the rules were carried by a two-thirds vote, yet we have no evidence of the truth of the record. It was a standing vote, and, doubtless, the result appeared to be as declared by the tellers ;

* From the fact of its appearance in the papers of the ensuing morning, it is presumable that it was entrusted to a reporter, for the enlightenment of the public mind.

but *who* voted, we know not. This we do know, that there were many persons in the meeting who were not members of the church, or even of the congregation. And this we verily believe; could the church be fairly polled, the legal members only voting, there would not be found the number necessary to amend the rules.

But this refusal to allow the yeas and nays, is an act of too serious a character to be allowed to pass without a word of further comment. So fundamentally important is this right to require a record by name of votes in assemblies of a self-governing community, regarded by wise and considerate men, that even the Constitution of the United States provides, Art. 1, Sec. 5, that "the yeas and nays of the members of either House, on any question, shall, at the desire of one-fifth of those present, be entered on the journal." And the Constitution of our own State still more carefully guards the rights of minorities. Art. 3, Sec. 15, provides that "no bill shall be passed" unless, *inter alia*, "the yeas and nays be entered on the journal."*

* If additional testimony be required to confirm the correctness of our judgment, we find it in the unvarying recognition of this right in the Constitutions of all the States in the Union, save three, Maryland, Virginia and South Carolina. We give an analysis of their respective provisions:

The Yeas and Nays are to be entered on the Journals of either House of the Legislature, on the demand of

one fifth of members present—UNITED STATES—

and States of Maine, Rhode Island, Connecticut,
New Jersey and Michigan;

one sixth of members present—Wisconsin;

any one member—New Hampshire, Vermont, Delaware;

" two " —Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Georgia,
Florida, Alabama, Louisiana, Tennessee,
Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Iowa;

" three " —Mississippi, Texas and California;

" five " —Missouri, Arkansas;

on the vote on all bills returned by the Governor—Massachusetts;

on the final vote on all bills—NEW YORK.

No provision on the subject—Maryland, Virginia and South Carolina.

When this testimony was alluded to at the church meeting of July 16th, one of the brethren of the majority (a lawyer,) attempted to parry its force by replying, that State Legislatures were only representative bodies! As though there were some abstract right in the uncertain, capricious despotism of chance majorities in a pure democracy! Admirable ethics for a Christian church!

Thus, in total disregard of a rule of action to the righteousness of which such emphatic testimony stands recorded, did the chairman of our meeting force upon the church his own judgment, in a matter involving some of our dearest rights as Congregationalists, and affecting the good name of the three brethren who have for years faithfully performed the work of deacons to us all and our families.

Before calling your attention to the Report itself, and to the amendments it recommended to our Standing Rules, we must ask your consideration of the character and effect of the proceedings by which the "Revolution" has been accomplished.

Long and anxious were the discussions of the brethren who, in the infancy of our enterprise, prepared the Rules under which we have lived harmoniously to this day. They saw clearly that the good order and peace of the church, its purity of doctrine, and the maintainance of its position amongst churches of different forms of government, could only be secured by so guarding our Rules as that they could not be rashly and hastily overthrown. Hence the provision of the 13th Rule, that "The confession of faith, covenant, rules and declaratory principles governing the church, shall not be altered, except by a vote of two-thirds of the members present and voting, at an annual meeting; such alteration having been proposed in writing at a previous business meeting." Hence also the provision in the 6th Rule, that "Special meetings for business shall be called by the clerk, by notice from the pulpit, upon requisition of ten male members, presented to him in writing." Hence, too, the solemn obligation incorporated into the "Covenant," which candidates are required to assume on uniting with the church: "With this church, into which you now enter in communion, you engage, by the grace of God, to walk according to all the instructions of the Gospel, earnestly seeking its peace, edification and purity, *submitting to its rules of government* and discipline, and constantly endeavoring to

grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Now, it was acknowledged at the annual meeting that the requisition for the special meeting, at which the alteration of the Rules relative to the officers of the Church was initiated, was not prepared until the evening of the Saturday preceding the Sabbath when the meeting was called. On the morning of the Sabbath, when inquiry was made for the clerk, he could not be found; and thus the call, as read from the pulpit, was in manifest violation of the Rule which we have quoted. This should have been observed at the time by the pastor, and the notice suppressed. But this, it seems, was the *public* "start" of the scheme to get rid of the obnoxious deacons. And all who participated in it seem to have been heedless of the manner in which they accomplished the work.

The attention of the Church was called to these irregularities at the annual meeting; but here, too, laws seemed to go for naught, and covenant vows were regarded as no hindrances to the success of the "Revolution."

Consider now the effect of these doings. The only security—your Rules—for the maintenance of your Confession of Faith is gone. The church has virtually decided that the expediency of the hour, the triumph of a party, the blind support of a pastor, may justify the overthrow of these safeguards.

So likewise it has devised and established a scheme by which an artful majority may get rid of a pastor who has become distasteful to them. The third Rule provides that "The permanent officers of this church shall be a pastor or pastors, and deacons." The church claims to have amended this, so far as the deacons are concerned. But by the same process by which this result is secured—if it be secured—the pastor may be as summarily turned out of office, "naked, penniless, friendless." Remember, that your pastor holds his relations to you by no other tenure than your mutual assent to the Rules of the Association.

And let us remind you, too, that a single decision of the church, legally had, is final in all questions of our internal polity. The only possibility of a review, is such a presentation of truth to the conscience of the majority as will lead them to retrace their steps. Our only Court for the correction of Errors is this conscience of the majority. But the evidence lies strewn all along the pathway of history, that no fortress is so impregnable as the conscience of him who holds power in his hand. And this is as true of communities as of individuals. Alas! too seldom is it that Grace throws back the bolt, even when Truth knocks at the gate, if her entrance does but intimate capitulation.

Christian brethren, your triumph is dearly purchased.

THE REPORT OF MESSRS. ABERNETHY, CHESTER AND HARVEY.

It remains for us to ask your attention to some of the allegations contained in this Report, and matters intimately connected therewith.

And *First*, as to its strangely frank and unguarded avowal of the motives which prompted these brethren to recommend the alteration in the Standing Rules, relative to deacons.

Their first pregnant remark is—"The only rule of great importance, whether considered on general principles, or with reference to the *present necessities* of the church, is the one from which a life tenure is inferred in the deaconship." And again they say, "Your Committee deem it the part of Christian frankness to declare, without disguise, yet in all courtesy, the reasons why they believe what is fit and wise at all times as to this office, *is of imperative necessity* in this church, *at this time*." They then proceed with averments respecting the action of the deacons—especially of two of them—the truth of which it would have been well for them to have more carefully investigated, before venturing to make them thus publicly; and they

conclude this paragraph with the remark, "The church cannot safely confide in men, as its representatives, who thus seek, of their own will, and without the voice of the church, or even calling for an open expression of its wishes, to sunder the ties of pastor and people." Divested of their apologetic verbiage, the simple meaning of these paragraphs is, that to get clear summarily of the deacons whose faithfulness and independence had made them unacceptable to the pastor, the church would be justified in overthrowing its fundamental law; in other words, for the gratification of the wishes, passions and prejudices of the moment, it is right to tamper with principles eternal and unvarying in their nature!—"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Of what value is any Rule which you have established, or obligation which you have assumed, if they may thus be blown about with the changing winds of the hour? Has the church a "sure foundation stone," or like the tent of the wandering Arab, may its principles be folded up and pitched anew, wherever expediency suggests, or human passion dictates?

The Report throughout aims to affix a stigma to the signers of the letter; and especially points to the deacons as the originators and managers of our movement. We will relieve them from the obloquy. The dissatisfaction in the church, as we have already had occasion to remark, is of long standing. Many have left on account of it. But the signers of the letter chose a different course. They met and counselled with each other. They discussed the propriety of "invoking the advice of the church." But they concluded that this would be tantamount to invoking a feud with the pastor. The suggestion of opening our feelings to him by a letter, did not originate with either of the deacons, and it was only after much consideration that they assented to its propriety. Instead of their "activity in getting it up, and procuring signatures," nearly all the names were signed on the spot when the letter was considered and adopted. Thus much for the truth of the charges against the deacons; and for the pre-

sumption of making allegations, the truth of which was never investigated, the ground work of such radical action as that of the annual meeting.

Respecting these brethren, who have been treated with so much contumely and injustice, we deem it a privilege to bear witness. Mr. Wood was one of the originators of the church, and the first one chosen of its officers. He had already won for himself a "good report" as a deacon in the Presbyterian church, under the care of Rev. Dr. Spring. Mr. Kingsley was set apart to the office in the year 1852, having served as a deacon in the Presbyterian Church, under the pastorate of Dr. Thos. McAuley; and Mr. Johnson was appointed to the office in the year 1854, having just previous to his uniting with us, been elected an elder in a newly formed Presbyterian Church in this city. These brethren have been faithful to the duties entrusted to them. In ministering to the sick and the needy; in their intercourse with the families of the congregation; in their remarkably uniform attendance at the public and social services of the church; by their judicious demeanor, their faithfulness and punctuality in the discharge of duty, and their personal co-operation in the Sabbath Schools,—they had secured for themselves the respect, confidence and affection of those still in our connection, and of the many families who have, first and last, made our church a temporary resting place. If ever there was a whisper against their character, their discretion, their judgment, until a sense of duty impelled them to remonstrate with our pastor in matters which they deemed rightly coming within the range of their office, we have yet to learn it. That they, in common with all the members of the last Prudential Committee, save one, three-fourths of the Trustees, and others, who have felt constrained to make the same complaints, and some of whom have left us in despair, should now be found *all* to be in the wrong, is one of the anomalies which now and then startle society, but whose delusive appearances are apt soon to pass away.

It should not be overlooked that the deacons are of co-ordi-

